

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD:

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DIA review(s) completed.

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
Walt W. Rostow

Attached is the paper on
the Congo which the President
requested of Mr. Helms this
morning.

13 July 1967
(DATE)

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The Situation in the Congo

1. The Situation. The mercenaries' rebellion has challenged the central government's position in a broad area of the eastern Congo, but at the moment military units at least nominally responsive to Kinshasa's direction are in control almost everywhere. There is no immediate threat to Mobutu's position as head of the central government, although there is always a possibility of unrest in a number of quarters while Mobutu is pre-occupied with the mercenaries.

2. The Mercenaries. Before the rebels broke through Congolese lines at Kisangani (Stanleyville) yesterday, the US defense attaché in Kinshasa estimated that there might be as many as 730 rebels (130 mercenaries and 500-600 Katangans) at the Kisangani Airport. This could be somewhat high. There were 27 trucks in the convoy which broke out. The convoy which is now headed southeasterly out of town, probably carries mostly rebels. We do not know of any rebels remaining behind in Kisangani.

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3. Mercenary Objectives. We assume that the rebels--who appear to have operated planlessly since the mutiny broke out--are now interested mainly in getting out of the Congo. They may try to get to Bukavu or (less likely) Bujumbura and from there try to commandeer aircraft to fly them to safety. Alternatively, they may try to reach Angola, the nearest safe haven, overland via Katanga. Either way they will have a hard time. It is well over a thousand miles to Angola, over roads which offer government forces numerous opportunities to harass them. To evacuate out of either Bukavu or Bujumbura, they will have to use airfields in neighboring countries (Rwanda and Burundi respectively), and they will be unable to avoid giving government forces advance warning of their intentions. Nevertheless, there is no force available to the government which can stand up to them. The mercenaries are probably well armed and will have no trouble requisitioning gasoline.

4. Mercenary Aircraft. We believe there are two T-28s under mercenary control, although maintenance problems may soon take them out of action. They appear to be operating from a marginal field at Punia. As long as they are operational, they will greatly

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facilitate the rebels' advance against the notoriously skittish Congolese Army.

5. Government Forces. The only large concentrations of government forces facing the rebels at the moment are at Bukavu and Kindu, where they number 700-1,000 each. The government will probably find it impossible to coordinate its operations without outside help. There are eight other T-28s available to the government, but at last report Mobutu had grounded all the white pilots. There are no qualified Congolese pilots.

6. Foreigners. US citizens in Kisangani numbered about 20 when the rebellion broke out (two US Army NCOs, eight missionaries, and their dependents). There were also about 20 British and Canadians, and larger numbers of Belgians, Greeks, etc. The over-all total was about 200. In addition, there were about 15 journalists of various European nationalities who were trapped in Kisangani when the fighting began. It was never entirely certain whether the whites were under mercenary control, and if so whether they had come willingly to escape the Congolese Army or were being used as hostages.

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7. Present Situation in Kisangani. The 15 journalists are known to be safe. There has been no word on the US citizens, and the first Red Cross mercy flight today could not find any European civilians, or the two US soldiers (one of whom was wounded). A second mercy flight is now in progress; a third one has been unable to leave Kinshasa. We do not know whether the rebels took any whites with them as hostages; given the relatively small size of the departing party, we doubt that it includes large numbers of hostages. The Red Cross has reported 100 Congo Army personnel wounded and requiring evacuation to Kinshasa. The Congolese general at Kisangani has officially requested a C-130 aircraft to lift out his wounded.

8. US Aircraft. All three C-130s are presently operating in the eastern Congo. One has brought troops and supplies to Kindu and to a town near Kisangani; a second is on a humanitarian mission to Bukavu. The third is a control aircraft which is providing communications near Kisangani.

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